

Wilderness

A Fact Sheet

Definition from the Wilderness Act

"A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. An area of wilderness is further defined to mean in this Act an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value."

National Wilderness Preservation System

Established – **1964** (by The Wilderness Act)

Size in 1964 – **9.1 million acres**

Size as of 2003 – **106,302,240 acres** (approximately 4.4 % of U.S.A.)

Number of wilderness areas as of 2003 – **662**

Amount of wilderness in Alaska - **58,182,216 acres**

States with no wilderness areas – **Connecticut, Delaware, Kansas, Maryland, Nebraska, Rhode Island**

Largest wilderness area – **Wrangell-St. Elias National Park**, Alaska, 9.7 million acres

Smallest wilderness area – **Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge**, Florida, 5 acres

First Department of Interior designated wilderness area – **Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge**, New Jersey in 1968

Federal agencies that manage wilderness - **National Park Service, US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, US Fish and Wildlife Service**

Federal agency that manages the most wilderness - **National Park Service** (42%)

National Park Service Wilderness (as of 2003)

Total NPS designated wilderness – **43,287,523 acres**

Percent of NPS land that is designated wilderness – **nearly 53%**

Number of National Park units with designated wilderness – **45**

Number of National Park units with proposed or recommended wilderness – **39**

Smallest NPS wilderness area – **Ansel Adams wilderness area** in Devils Postpile National Monument, 747 acres

Quotes

"We simply need that wild country available to us, even if we never do more than drive to its edge and look in. For it can be a means of reassuring ourselves of our sanity as creatures, a part of the geography of hope."

- Wallace Stegner

"Our expansive civilization ... will eventually modify for human exploitation every last area on earth – except those that through human foresight and wisdom have been deliberately set aside for preservation."

- Howard Zahniser

"... There is a need in our planning to secure the preservation of some areas that are so managed as to be left unmanaged – areas that are undeveloped by man's mechanical tools and in every way unmodified by his civilization."

- Howard Zahniser

"It is a bold thing for a human being who lives on the earth but a few score years at the most to presume upon the Eternal and covet perpetuity for any of his undertakings.

Yet we who concern ourselves with wilderness preservation are compelled to assume this boldness and with the courage of this peculiar undertaking of ours so to order our enterprise as to direct our efforts toward the perpetual"

- Howard Zahniser

For more information on Wilderness visit:

<www.wilderness.net>

<<http://planning.nps.gov/wilderness/default.cfm>>